

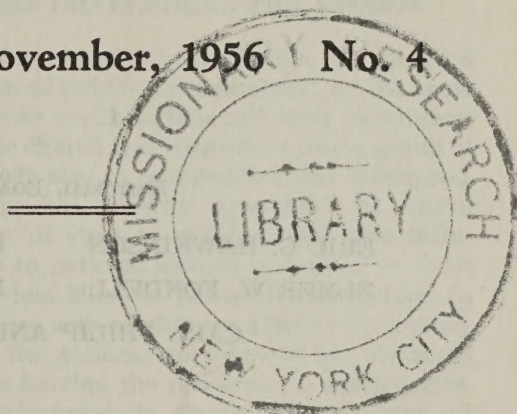
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The Christian World Mission on New Frontiers

Two Lectures

by

R. PIERCE BEAVER

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THE CHRISTIAN WORLD MISSION ON NEW FRONTIERS

R. PIERCE BEAVER

I.

THE WORLD SITUATION CHALLENGES THE MISSION

Last autumn a member introduced into the Indian parliament a bill requiring the registration of religious conversions. At the same time there were vicious attacks on Christians and their missionary associates. A Roman Catholic church was desecrated, and a group of Anglican catechumens on their way to confirmation was kidnapped. The Indian government also has recently announced its official policy of drastic curtailment of visas to missionaries. The influence of resurgent Hinduism in national affairs is evident in these things. Fortunately, the Prime Minister personally intervened to defeat the bill and to denounce acts of violence against Christians, and on numerous occasions the national government has corrected provincial officials who were barring the residence of missionaries. Recent months have also witnessed, in China, the expulsion of almost all of the last few imprisoned missionaries and the renewed persecution of pastors who have not been zealous in beating the gong and loudly praising the present regime. Hundreds of Christians in Kenya have been martyred at the hands of nationalist fanatics because their faith is regarded as treason to their people and their race. Due to the apartheid policy of the South African government, a certain great mission station is destined to abandonment because it has been declared a white enclave in a black area. Muslim missionaries stand outside of American churches and hand out tracts. These are but a few of the myriad symptoms of a radically changed world climate which embarrass old missionary methods, make some of them obsolete, and impel all Christians who are obedient to the Great Commission to engage in profound thinking about the nature, aims, and methods of the Christian mission.

Our day appears to many persons to be a time of the closing of doors to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and it contrasts markedly with a century ago when doors were standing open and missionaries were streaming out from Western countries in ever

greater numbers. The then newly opened ports of China and Japan were symbolic of the unlimited opportunities for the proclamation of the Gospel at far ends of the earth. Then it was that European cultural, economic, and political expansion, western prestige, and general stability and peace favored a mission of the western churches. Well down into this present century many peoples were still accepting Christianity, at least in part, as integral to a much desired European culture.

The present also contrasts with the situation at the end of World War II, only a decade ago, when missionary promotional literature was full of optimism and talk of open doors. Then it was that regions temporarily cut off by military action were once again open to Christian fellowship and evangelism. We optimistically believed that the barriers to the Gospel had fallen and that an era of unhampered evangelism lay before us. It was confidently asserted that in China the church was finding its greatest evangelistic opportunity since the days of the Apostles. The independence of southern and southeast Asian nations was expected to free the Gospel from the incubus of colonial associations. I recall coming home as a repatriate from an internment camp and preaching on this text from the 107th Psalm: "Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! For he hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder." There were many sermons preached, or missionary addresses based, on Paul's words: "A wide door for effective work has been opened." However, no one seemed to complete that verse with the reference to adversaries. Adversaries were not seriously expected.

The state of affairs is now quite different from either a century ago or a decade past. It is just as hostile to an easy expansion of the Christian faith as the world climate of that time was favorable to it. Europe has declined, and western prestige has sunk to a low ebb. The center of power has shifted from western Europe to America, and Asia, Africa, and Latin America fear what they believe to be the overt, or at times thinly veiled, cultural and economic imperialism of the United States. Nationalism is rampant everywhere, especially in the newly independent states of southern and eastern Asia and in western Africa. Colonial peoples aspire to be masters of their own destinies and resources. Consequently, both in independent and colonial areas antifoignism grows steadily more intense. These are regions inhabited by colored peoples, and, therefore, race enters the picture. Colored peoples reject white claims to superiority and to the right to dominate others. Eager hands reach up to pull the so-called "white man's burden" from his shoulders and to push him back into his own western homeland. The ancient religions, especially Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam,

have revived and are allied with the new nationalism. The welfare state is to be found everywhere because the nation pretends to be the new messiah and savior of its people. Schools, hospitals, and other services provided by the mission are now declared to be the sole responsibility of the state. The world is sharply cleft into power blocs of East and West. The peoples of parts of Asia and Africa do not want to be crushed between them and, therefore, they espouse the role of neutralism. Witness the complete rejection of the pro-western government in Ceylon early this month (April, 1956). Communism further muddies the waters. All peoples live in fear of atomic annihilation, which it is believed the West holds over the world. In such a situation it is not a matter for surprise that the missionary from the West should find many a door shut to him and that his first reaction, and that of many of his supporting churchmen at home, should be that the doors have been closed to the Gospel itself.

Thus it is that one hears repeatedly: "Missions are finished," or "The end of the missionary enterprise is at hand." Some enemies of the Christian mission make this assertion with glee, and within the church many friends whisper that word in panic, forgetting that while a Christian must always feel a sense of urgency he dare never give way to panic, for that is evidence that he has lost his faith. It is undoubtedly a time to take stock and to analyze the situation. It is time to replace easygoing optimism with robust faith.

A little Biblical realism is needed with respect to "open" and "closed" doors. Our Lord never promised ease and security to his servants, but he did promise power for witness. He has never required statistical success, but he does ask for faith and obedient ministry. Wherever that offering is made to him, he always keeps a door open, for until every knee is bowed before him and every tongue confesses him, the mission cannot end.

It was not only to the weak little community of Christians at ancient Philadelphia that the Lord said: "Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut." He says it to every church in every age if he can also say to it: "I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name." Out of obedience in keeping the word of the Great Commission and publishing the name of the Savior, God has fashioned many pillars for the temple of his kingdom. The missionary activity of the church in Antioch was that kind of obedience. Intent upon opening doors to Christ for others, God opened for it a door of power. It was from Antioch that Christianity entered first into the life stream of Hellenistic culture and then a little later into the Syriac-speaking world. When Paul and his fellow missionaries returned to Antioch from one of their journeys, "they gathered the church together and declared all that God had done

with them, and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles." Such a door was not usually one of easy ingathering that cost the missionary little. Paul found open doors where others might have found only barriers and insurmountable obstacles. Once he wrote to the community in Corinth: "I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries." He did not write, "*but* there are many adversaries," thereupon give way to panic, and go off to another place where there were few obstacles. Rather it would appear that the door was to be found in the confrontation of adversaries and that testimony to them and to others in the face of that opposition provided an opportunity which was to be seized. When jailers shut Paul up in prison behind iron bars and locks and guards, seemingly cutting off all opportunity for missionary endeavor, he exhorted his children in the Lord at Colossae: "Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving; and pray for us also, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison, that I may make it clear, as I ought to speak." A door was opened for the Gospel through Paul's lips and pen. His letters went forth to young churches, and his prison cell became a pulpit. He could say without boasting: "What has happened to me has really served to advance the Gospel."

If one has faith and genuinely believes in the saviorhood and lordship of Jesus Christ, he must in consequence believe that God is working out his purposes in the travail of the world in our time. Open doors for the Gospel are to be found in what to the eyes of unbelief or small faith appear as gigantic adversaries. Careful study and bold experimentation may prove that many of these adversaries are really open doors of opportunity. They open upon new frontiers, and a pioneering age for the mission—as great as that early one introduced by Ziegenbalg, Zinzendorf, and Carey—lies before us. The very concept of a "Christian world mission" opens up magnificent vistas of breathtaking challenge. It is a rare privilege to be heralds of the cross in such an age of momentous change, when the adversaries are fierce but when we can still be sure that God reigns and that what may appear to be defeats for his mortal servants nevertheless are happening to the advance of the Gospel.

One reason why I am quite sure that the present revolutionary situation is really a new frontier for the presentation of the Gospel is that the Christian mission has been one of the most potent factors contributing to this state of affairs. The revolution in Asia, the Pacific, Africa, and Latin America is basically the spontaneous rising tide of the vast ocean of the miserable, as the poor, the dispossessed, and the disinherited reach out hungry hands towards bread, land, political power, and human rights. That is why Com-

munism with its perfidious promises of righting wrongs and attaining earthly salvation is able to dupe so many. Western, and especially American, movies and magazines as well as the example of our millions of military personnel recently spread over the whole globe have shown what appears to be the abundant material life of the West. The "have nots" want these things, too; and they are rebelling against hunger, tenancy and landlordism, poverty, disease, and everlasting debt, which they now know do not have to be borne as part of existence itself.

There is a difference of opinion as to how much the Christian mission has contributed to this desire for a more abundant material life; but there is no doubt that from the beginning missionaries have endeavored to stimulate people to better their lot, both because they believed it right in the sight of God and because they wanted to raise up self-supporting churches. They went forth to proclaim the Gospel, and they knew instinctively that the spoken word must be authenticated by the dramatic word of action. Moreover, they looked upon ignorance, disease, and poverty through the eyes of Christ and were moved with compassion. They saw them degrading God's children and breeding sin. Therefore the school, the printing press, the hospital, and methods of economic improvement accompanied verbal preaching. In one Asiatic province two pioneer missionaries are remembered gratefully as "the big apple saint" and "the big peanut saint" because of the measure of liberation which these two products brought the people. Although they may not be spectacular as individual efforts, the accumulation of innumerable instances of ministry to the material needs of people for the sake of Christ throughout three centuries has had incalculable effect. Surely when the peoples have awakened en masse to a determination to achieve a better life—something for which the missionaries have striven so long—this must be a door of opportunity for the Gospel, even if many missionaries are injured by it because they are Westerners and the West is under suspicion.

However, the most potent leaven which the missionaries planted was neither the desire for nor the technical aids to a better material life. It was the transforming, liberating, redeeming power of the Gospel itself. It is related that once the poverty-stricken scholar Muretus lay grievously ill in a Paris hospital. Physicians and surgeons stood beside his bed and discussed his case in Latin, not supposing that the patient could understand. One contemptuously referred to the sick man as "this worthless fellow." "What!" exclaimed the man on the bed, "Do you call him worthless for whom Christ died?" That, in essence, has been the ejaculation of thousands of Christians drawn from outcaste and underprivileged groups when those on higher rungs of the social ladder have looked down upon them. The heralds of the Gospel had proclaimed the fatherhood of

God, the saviorhood and lordship of Jesus Christ, the brotherhood of all children of God, and the unsurpassed dignity and worth of every individual redeemed by the cross of Christ. A generation ago a study made of mass movements in India revealed that liturgical worship, dramatically implementing the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, was more effective than industrial schools in stimulating illiterate former outcastes to improve their standard of living. Working out from the Christian community and its schools, this leaven has permeated society to a remarkable extent, influencing even those who have not been directly confronted by our Lord. Gunther, in his book *Inside Africa*, declares: "The Christian Gospel can be a markedly disruptive force in an animistic society, because it teaches something that primitive peoples have little knowledge of—the importance of the individual." It can be disruptive of much in every society if a true understanding of it strikes home. Gunther is right about the revolutionary nature of the Gospel's high evaluation of personality. That high evaluation rests on the view of each man as a creature and child of God, the object of his redeeming love, and through God's grace in the cross potentially capable of rising to the full spiritual stature of a son of God. The Christian mission has constantly aimed at such a revolutionary transformation. Has not the slogan of the last hundred years been the fostering of churches "self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating?" It has been our confident expectation that the Holy Spirit would raise up, even out of depressed peoples, new communities in Christ, healthy and vigorous in all ways.

Therefore this world-wide outreach for a larger share of the world's goods and for human rights ought to be welcomed by Christians, not deplored. There is forming a vast new global frontier of a social and economic nature on which there is a thrilling challenge to proclaim Christ as Lord. His ministering servants have a task of tremendous magnitude in bringing his illumination and his judgment to bear on this progressing revolution, to guard the welfare of the individual against being lost in the drive for community welfare, and to assert the sovereignty of Christ over the new order. The long, hard battle for human rights in the West was largely achieved through Christian championship of those rights; the job has to be done over in a more difficult situation in other parts of the world.

One thing of which we can be certain is that this social and economic revolution is necessary before the hope of a true world mission of the church can be realized. The similar revolution through which we in the West passed a century and more ago gave our rank and file church members both the sense of personal attainment which could lead a man or woman to offer himself or herself

for missionary service and the money to support missionaries. It was not millionaires who provided the cash for Protestant missionary expansion but a cross section of the church membership below that level of economic superfluity. The younger churches are awakening to their missionary responsibility, and their first missionaries are going forth; but the churches are still too poor to support a very large effort. They await greater economic resources.

This reference to the social and economic goals of the revolution calls to mind the difficulties which the rise of the welfare state is causing the mission. There is resentment in some quarters that the state is taking over services in which the mission has pioneered and threatening to exclude Christian and other private agencies from these activities. It is not only in China, where the church has been stripped of all educational, medical, and philanthropic institutions, that the state now claims sole responsibility for public welfare. It has become quite general in the newly independent countries and older awakened ones, although few of them are able fully to provide these services. On the whole, Christians believe that the state should provide the people with such services but deny its right to a monopoly of them. The church has functions of education, healing, and ministry to human need which are required both for the nourishing of its own life and for its proclamation of the Gospel. It is only in rare circumstances that the church and its missions should try to compete with government in this field, and the present situation in South Africa created by the Bantu Education Act is such an instance. The closing of mission schools because of the withdrawal of government subsidies involves condoning a violation of human rights, and to the average African it looks like betrayal. In the end, closing the schools in South Africa may prove far more costly than keeping them open. This event ought to make clear to the whole missionary enterprise that it is dangerous to rely on government subsidy and that missions cannot compete with government because of costs in any field of public welfare. Nor can missions compete any more successfully with the technical assistance projects of the United Nations Organization affiliates and with those of governments, such as the Point IV program of the United States. The easy answer is to point to the growing volume of such activities, and to governmental restrictions, and to say that the times demand the elimination of all these activities from the mission program. That is no real solution.

Before endeavoring to say what should be the relation of missionary welfare services to those of governments and of various technical assistance agencies, it should be noted that this issue is closely connected with the whole problem of missionary institutions. To the surprise of many persons, Christian congregations are worshipping and carrying on evangelism in China today long after all

the institutions, excepting the churches themselves, were expropriated by the government. The China experience, including the loss of heavy financial investments, has led to a careful scrutiny of institutions as such, and by the time of the Willingen Conference in 1952 they were under heavy fire. Young church representatives especially were asking critical questions. It was discovered that commitments in personnel and funds to institutions of all sorts tie up and immobilize the greater part of our resources for the mission, which is then deprived of mobility, an essential asset in a time of rapid change. Moreover, these institutions are now on the whole more related to the maintenance of the young churches than to an evangelistic advance even though established on patterns often uncongenial to the young churches and impossible for them to support. What we call the missionary enterprise has become to a great extent a vast system of interchurch aid. It is our duty to assist in partnership the young churches which we have helped to bring into being, but it is a folly to saddle them with inappropriate western-form institutions which make Christianity appear exotic and which cannot be continued without western support far into the future. The young churches, therefore, are doubtful about the value of much of the institutional work the missions want to hand over to them. Their voice is heard in this statement from the Willingen Conference: "The present situation calls however for re-examination of the number, type and character of the institutions in relation to the church's total task and resources. Colleges, schools, and hospitals were founded, mostly from the West, and in accordance with western patterns. In the changed circumstances of our times there is urgent need to ask whether resources claimed by some of these institutions should not be released for use in new enterprises closer to the local church and more central to its missionary task." Institutions, moreover, tend to become ends in themselves. They gather the loyalty of both missionaries and nationals on the staff, of alumni, and of the constituency. They become exceedingly resistant to change, merger or elimination. Each agency should guard against this unhappy tendency and should think of itself only as the body of Christ functioning for witness in a particular way, an expression of the local and universal church's life and work and one aspect of its witness in that particular place. It should be grown and nourished in the local soil and, as far as possible, responsible to the local church. Vigilance against "institutionalism" is imperative, and when in the course of repeated scrutiny an agency is seen to be in need of change or suppression, it should be willing to place the larger good of the Kingdom ahead of the personal interests of those who are intimately involved in its life. That is more easily advocated than achieved. Quality should be kept at the highest, and the low level of some missionary institutions is a very

poor offering of praise unto our Lord. Above all, every institution ought to be an exemplar of the Christian faith. It should reveal the *koinonia*, the unity of brethren, at its heart, giving it life and relevance. There is no excuse for keeping alive and swallowing mission funds a college in which the Christian members of the faculty and of the student body are respectively only ten and five per cent of the total, unless those Christians can in that context demonstrate a corporate life of faith and ministry which is an effective witness and colors the life of the whole school. In that event their faith will be so contagious that they will not long remain a tiny minority. Many institutions must be induced to die and others to change drastically so that the resources may be released for a new evangelistic advance with a fluid policy to meet the changing situation and at least a small mobile striking force to shift at quick notice to points of emerging opportunity.

The solution to the problem of institutional rigidity may be found in an emphasis upon functional performance over against institutional form. Proclamation of the Gospel—witness to Christ or evangelism—is effected through the coupling of the spoken word and the dramatic word in individual discipleship, corporate fellowship, common worship, prophetic preaching, teaching, pastoral care, healing, works of compassion, feeding the hungry, striving for reconciliation, and through liberating the victims of oppression. They all impart a note of authenticity to the spoken word, and they are functions which may not be sacrificed. The forms through which the functions are discharged may need to change from time to time. It is far better to put western money into skilled personnel, training programs, tools, techniques, and extension work than into huge western style buildings, which by their very nature stimulate “institutionalism.” Let there be less emphasis on buildings, less even on static institutions, and more on function in the most informal manner. Let there be more emphasis on a voluntary lay ministry in the discharge of these functions and diffusion through the far reaches of the land rather than concentration in mission stations.

Rural community projects and medical missions may be taken as examples of institutionally “root bound” forms of mission activities which might more readily than some others, like great educational systems, be comparatively deinstitutionalized and re-directed towards extension-type activities. Although experts, such as John Reisner and Ira Moomaw of Agricultural Missions, Inc., have persistently advocated such a line of development, missions have been relatively slow to move. James G. Maddox’s recent report, *Technical Assistance by Religious Agencies in Latin America*, presents a rather discouraging picture of mission agricultural projects in that region. Mission farms make up the majority of

these projects. Ordinarily there are one or more schools located on the farm, but they are usually general elementary and secondary schools just as in cities and seldom offer programs of practical instruction in farming related to the lives of poor people in the neighborhood. These farms, on the whole, are poor producers, lose money, seldom do more than supply the mission and schools with food, and take up too much of the missionary's time. Experimental and extension programs are rare. Where there has been an attempt at a community development program, little has been accomplished if United States personnel predominate in the work. National workers have proven more effective. Maddox asserts that the missions would greatly improve the quality and effectiveness of their agricultural work in Latin America if: "they would (1) reduce the scale of their money-losing farm operations; (2) center the attention of their agricultural missionaries on community-improvement programs; (3) employ national technicians to work directly with farm families; and (4) emphasize the adoption of a few simple farm and home practices that will show immediate results in the early stages of each community development program."

Dr. Maddox finds mission medical work in Latin America to be of a high quality, first rate in technical skill, and highly appreciated. Government health services, as in other parts of the world, have followed where the mission health program has pioneered, but they still do not give as much service to poor people as do the mission hospitals and clinics. However, despite their high quality, the missionary doctors appear to be very slow in introducing new techniques and medicines. Moreover, their emphasis is almost entirely upon curative medicine whereas the great challenge now is in preventive medicine. Maddox states: "A given amount of money spent to teach large numbers of people a few simple practices about good nutrition, personal hygiene, and home sanitation would almost assuredly do more to improve health conditions than if it were spent to equip and operate hospitals and clinics. Moreover, the techniques and methods of preventive medicine are much less developed in Latin America than are those of curative medicine. There is both a challenge and an opportunity in this situation."

This observation about the medical mission in Latin America accords with the observations and recommendations made about such work in general a few years ago by Dr. Harold G. Anderson, medical secretary of the Church Missionary Society. He foresees the state devoting more and more of its resources to the adequate equipment and maintenance of curative services, with a consequent loss of patients to mission hospitals and a drastic drop in the fees which have made possible provision for the sick poor. The new techniques and means of healing can increasingly be applied to the patient where he lives, and there is consequently less need of

hospitalization. (A contrast to the situation in the United States, apparently, where our people try to get into a hospital for very trivial reasons.) While there will still be need for hospital centers, the medical missionary's role will take on increasingly a supervisory nature. He will direct workers trained at the center in healing, prevention, and welfare work, scattered throughout the far reaches of the countryside. Those patients who can receive the needed curative treatment only in a central hospital will be sent there by these mobile workers; all others will be treated at home or near home by the field workers. Dr. Anderson states: "Some of these peripheral workers will necessarily be full-time and paid; but if the full impact of this channel of Christian compassion is to be felt in the community, the majority of them should be voluntary, though adequately instructed and supervised. Church members, who in this function will, after all, only be literally obeying Christ's reiterated commands, form the natural pool from which such helpers should be selected. Moreover, themselves so instructed, their households should in some measure become a vivid demonstration of the effects of the principles preached and an inducement to their adoption by their neighbors."

Does this emphasis on the less formal performance of vital functions over against static institutions then give a clue to the relationship of mission projects in education, health, and other welfare services to governmental and other technical assistance activities in the same fields? I think that it does provide a very useful approach to the problem. First of all, such activities must be directed towards meeting the needs of the Christian community itself in strengthening the discipleship of individual believers, fostering the corporate life of the fellowship, training leadership for the churches, preparing laity for Christian witness in national life, and providing the church with sufficient opportunity to authenticate the spoken word by supplementing it with the word in action. Then, secondly, since the mission pioneered in such welfare services and led the nations in this path, there remains an obligation to maintain a few first-class institutions which can challenge the other institutions to continuous improvement in quality. They are also necessary to demonstrate to public and private agencies the fruitfulness of combining spiritual motivation, love of neighbor because of love of God, warm human compassion, and sacrificial devotion with the highest scientific standards and processes. Thirdly, although Christian witness ought always be made to all classes and conditions of men and some special agencies are needed with respect to the intelligentsia and the well-to-do, welfare services in the name of Christ should be directed primarily to the most needy, especially to those neglected by others. It was that concern for the despised and forsaken which led the first Moravian missionaries in 1732 to

choose the Negroes of St. Thomas as their first objective, and it is still a valid concern. In the fourth place, the services ought to be taken to the people where they live and a policy of diffusion rather than concentration be followed, relying on many small units of operation, on mobile outfits, and itineration. Let these then be the means of bold experimentation in informal teaching and health procedures. Finally, put the evangelical principle of the ministry of all disciples to work and rely as far as possible on voluntary service by laymen under professional guidance. When and if governmental welfare services follow this path, then the matter can be reconsidered once more.

The welfare state is one of the manifestations of nationalism, that most vigorous of all the foes of the mission today. Nationalism in the Orient came into being in reaction to western and Japanese political, military, economic and cultural imperialism. It has only recently arisen in Africa. It is a phenomenon of the twentieth century, although it emerged somewhat earlier in Japan and in Korea under Japanese pressure. Anti-western movements before this time were acts of cultural resistance to European-American penetration rather than true nationalistic expressions. The Boxer Uprising of 1900 in China is the last major example of such a reaction. After that, pride in ancient culture became only one ingredient in patriotism. Missionaries at first welcomed this new sense of nationalism and claimed at least part credit for its rise. They thought it evidence of maturity and a prelude to internationalism. Intensified during World War I, this earlier type of nationalism reached its climax in Asia in the period after World War II and came to fruition in the independence of eight Asian nations. Since then this earlier type of patriotic nationalism has been transformed into that religious or mystical statism which had already led Germany, Italy, and Japan to disaster. We must recognize that it flourishes also in the West and that it is a threat in our own land.

The present nationalism which is confronting the mission is, then, religious statism, claiming for the state the role of God and demanding absolute allegiance. It is set in the context of a revolt of Asian and African peoples against western, white colonialism, economic dominance, and pretensions to superiority; against hunger, landlessness, disease, and poverty; against lack of human dignity, rights, and power. Communism seeks cleverly to capture this revolution and in its strategy tries to identify itself with nationalist aspirations until having secured a sufficient grasp of the means of power it obtains full control, as in China, North Korea, and Viet Minh. Almost everywhere in Asia and Africa this revolution comes to focus in nationalism. It is the state which is the supreme authority and the supreme good. While impotent under foreign control, the state when independent becomes the savior which will

achieve all the goals of the revolution. Not only is the national state the object of supreme allegiance and devotion, but it gathers to itself all the hallowed associations and loyalties of the folk religion, which is now identified with the state. There is a genuine revival of ethnic religion, but the nation attempts to direct that new life to its own ends. "Nationalism," say the Asian churchmen in the book, *Christianity and the Asian Revolution*, "imparts a new interpretation to religion. Instead of being an isolated and insulated factor in people's lives, largely other-worldly and spiritual, religion is made part of the this-worldly and secular force of nationalism." Thus Islam is an integral part of nationalism in Pakistan, Malaya, and Indonesia; Buddhism in Ceylon and Burma; Hinduism in India; and Roman Catholic Christianity offers itself for that role in the Philippines.

Such militant nationalism is suspicious of outsiders, and anti-foreignism is rampant in the independent countries. In dependent lands, nationalism naturally takes the form of anticolonialism, and all whites are identified with the ruling power, missionaries not excepted, especially if their schools and welfare services receive subsidies from the colonial government. Such nationalism is almost everywhere, in both free and colonial countries, making the role of the foreign missionary increasingly difficult. India, Burma, and Indonesia are granting visas to only a minority of applicants. It is feared that India's policy of granting entrance visas and resident permits only to missionaries with specialized training or skill helpful to the nation and taking a position for which no national is available will be followed by others. Missionaries are denied entrance to, or ejected from, areas said to be strategic, such as the Naga Hills of Assam. Evangelism in many places is possible only by national agents, and "proselytism," as it is called, is denounced, despite the clauses on freedom of religion in most constitutions. Increasingly nationalism makes impossible or less and less effective the missionary methods of the last hundred and fifty years.

The young churches, being part of the common life of any land, are also caught up by this nationalism. Their members are no less patriots than their non-Christian neighbors, and they resent charges that the Christian faith denationalized them. Moreover, if the missionaries retain control of the church organization, or if the young church members feel that despite formal devolution the missionaries still retain actual control, or if they believe that the missionaries have in their hearts a feeling of superiority, then there will be just as strong antiforeignism in the church as in the nation at large. Furthermore, devolution eliminates the missionary entirely unless there accompanies it a new understanding of the mission as a total concern of the group and the new church together as complementary members in the universal church of Christ. Much of the current

trouble has resulted from thinking of mission largely in terms of church extension, and neither the national nor the missionary really knows what the place of the missionary is. Only a new concept of world mission and actual partnership in realizing it will solve this problem.

The missionary has endeavored to meet the challenge of nationalism by claiming a supranational status, as in the statement on that subject adopted by the Whitby Conference in 1947, but his claim has not been generally recognized. He remains in the eyes of nationals the agent of western cultural, if not political, imperialism, and a representative of his particular country. The American missionary is especially under suspicion today. I was appalled by the statement of a well-known economist who has been studying Latin America that in the regions from the Rio Grande to the Cape of Good Hope one can observe no measurable difference between missionaries from the United States, be they Roman Catholic or any variety of Protestant, until one gets into worshipping churches. They all, he says, transmit the same North American culture. Similarly a Dutch Roman Catholic missiologist told me that Americans generally make poor missionaries because they are "one hundred per cent Americans" who are convinced that their homeland is "God's country" and have too little regard for, and understanding of, the genius and culture of other peoples. If that is true of Roman Catholics with their submission to a universal training and discipline, how much more so it must apply to us Protestants! Another response of the mission boards and the missionaries has been the effort to accelerate the process of devolution and to strengthen the leadership of the younger churches. Yet, despite all efforts, the native ministry lags far behind the numerical growth of the churches. In 1938 there was one ordained minister to 787 persons in the Protestant community, while in 1952 there was only one to 1,280. With respect to the missionary, he still retains too many overt and covert means of control, particularly the power of the purse.

Still another response is the attempt to separate the essential truths of the Gospel from our western forms of Christianity, transmit these, and then foster indigenous expression of Christian truth in each cultural setting. Missionaries can do much to encourage indigenization, but the nationals themselves must achieve it. Only a superficial beginning has been made in matters of cultus; only a little achieved in the realm of leadership organization and forms of support for an effective ministry; and scarcely anything done in the most essential field—formulating theology in indigenous terms.

Yet another response to nationalism has been the attempt of the missionary to identify himself with his brethren in the national

church. For the past decade there has been much talk about the disparity in income and standards of living, the sin of the isolating mission station and the huge mission bungalow, and simple living. Some single women have experimented notably in simple living in native style, but few others. Many missionaries today live in native style homes and use native furniture and foodstuffs. One bold writer, who himself set the example, recently urged the missionaries to intermarry with the natives, but the outcry was so great that he had to leave that recommendation out of the second printing of his report. Our candidates have been condemning the older missionaries for the great gap between them and their national colleagues, vowing to close the gap and live with the people where they live, according to the same simple life. Then, once appointed for a field, they take out with them tons of freight, including all the gadgets of the American "simple" life and an automobile. They then find themselves farther from the nationals than their elders were and are frustrated. The disparity of income, the difference in standards of living, and the foreign ways are not such tremendous barriers to identification if there is genuine Christian love and sharing of a common life in the *koinonia*. It is too rarely that western missionaries really demonstrate in their homes and their dealings with their brethren that in Christ "there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man." When an African pastor is made to go to the missionary's back door, when an Indian Christian is not admitted to the living room, when no national colleague ever shares in the breaking of bread at the missionary's table, there is a denial of the gospel that has been preached. There is no point in living in a native house and eating native food if one does not fully open that home to one's brethren and share it in friendship and Christian brotherhood. Identification is more a matter of attitudes and personal relations than of conforming to certain external patterns. There are those who achieve identification. When an agitator, denouncing foreigners, whipped up the fury of a crowd in Sungkiang and led the mob to kill or expel the foreigner from their city, the frenzy left them and they stood aghast the moment they saw the intended victim. "That is no foreigner!" they cried. "That is Pastor Burke, an old Sungkiang man!"

Since all the colonial areas are under the domination of white rule and the new independent nations have so recently escaped from the same, nationalism and anticolonialism tend also to include racism. Thus, although the peoples of Africa know relatively little of each other, Gold Coast nationalism is tending to enlarge into West African nationalism, and African nationalism in particular is beginning to show tendencies towards becoming pan-Africanism. Race is the burning issue in Africa. Since each of the other races

has grievances against the white race, white becomes the symbol of injustice, and the peoples of color make common cause together. In such a situation one sees the failure of the Christian church to practice the brotherhood in Christ which it preaches. This is one of the most important causes of the existence of the more than 1,300 independent, indigenous, separatist sects in South Africa. The practical brotherhood of Islam has long put Christian professions of equality to shame, and Africans are embracing it in great numbers. The attractiveness of Islamic brotherhood is well expressed in a recent novel, *Blanket Boy*, by an African chief, A. S. Mopeli-Paulus. In view of this situation, a solidly white missionary force of 38,000 persons appears the height of stupidity from a strategic viewpoint and of sin from a theological viewpoint. The tiny handful of missionaries with colored skins from the churches of Asia, the Pacific islands, and the American churches, are scarcely noticeable in that sea of white faces. We have some 20,000 missionaries from the United States abroad, and in 1949, when I made a study of the subject, there were less than 100 missionaries of the Negro churches. Nine mission boards of other churches reported 49 Negro missionaries, about 37 persons of Japanese ancestry, nine of Chinese origin, four of Korean, and three of Indian ancestry. There were no American Indians serving as foreign missionaries. How can colored peoples believe in a Gospel of reconciliation when it is not demonstrated among those who proclaim it?

The identification of religion with nationalism has been noted. The state has gathered to itself the loyalties of the folk religion and has received the benediction of that religion. In turn, it supports the religious organization. However, it would be a great mistake to assume that the revival of Eastern religion is only a politically-inspired movement intended to give an aura of holiness to the state. Political leaders do recognize that the old religions are the wellsprings of their national cultures and build on that fact, but most of them are earnest followers of those religions. There is a genuine spiritual and cultural resurgence of the great religions. It is partly their response to the impact and challenge of Christianity. It is partly due to the ferment which independence has brought, or which a present struggle for independence induces, and to a conscious desire to magnify the national heritage. But more than anything else the revival is a demonstration of the great reservoir of life and power which these religions possess. The ferment in Islam is due largely to the recovery of political autonomy and responsibility by the Islamic states after World War I and World War II, rectifying a situation utterly in contradiction to the teaching of the Koran. Hinayana Buddhism has seen a new vision of its role as the spiritual basis of a new world order which can ac-

cord with modern science but direct science to the benefit and not the bane of mankind. It believes that it can achieve world peace, whereas it sees Christianity to be the author of division, strife, war, and the threat of atomic annihilation. A Hinduism so transformed as to be scarcely recognizable in many respects seeks to shape the destinies of the Indian nation. But how does one account for the tremendous activity in Buddhism, Shinto, and the new messianic sects in Japan? Then there is the atheistic messianic faith of Marxist materialism contending for the allegiance of men everywhere. The religions are not dead. Christianity is not filling in a vacuum as has been generally assumed for half a century.

Christians, in consequence of the resurgence of the religions allied with nationalism, lose many of the government jobs which they held under colonial regimes. However, that is of minor importance alongside the violence shown towards them in some places and the legal disabilities which some extremists are striving to settle upon them. Still more significant are the charges of betrayal of the national cause and culture which some of their neighbors hurl at the Christians. It is reported that in West Africa de-Christianized nationalistic intellectuals are reconsidering the discarded tribal religion and considering various ideologies simply because they are not Christian. There are reports that in the face of such attacks more Christian groups in southern Asia are succumbing to the temptation to withdraw from the national life into something like a Christian ghetto. It is natural that in such circumstances the Western missionary should especially suffer restrictions and in some places be threatened with elimination.

However, the revived religions are no longer content to face Christianity only in their own home territories. They are launching foreign missions. Vedanta missionaries, especially the Ramakrishna Mission, have long been active in the West. Muslim missionaries, especially Ahmadiya agents from Pakistan, are to be found in our cities. Japanese Buddhists and some of the new Japanese messianic sects are working among the Neisi in the United States and Hawaii. Two new Buddhist mission organs in Burma are training personnel for work in western countries.

Not only do the ethnic religions hold the key to understanding the cultures in which the young churches must become indigenous, but this revival of religion presents a new opportunity for Christian witness. A far more genuine encounter on spiritual grounds is possible than where the Gospel meets indifference. Yet there are available pitifully few scholars among the missionaries and the nationals to advise us, whereas a century ago most of the western experts in the religions were missionaries. It is a deficiency which cannot quickly be made up, but men and women must of necessity

be set aside for continuous study in the history of religions and of eastern and African cultures.

Nationalism, anticolonialism, racism, the welfare state, revived ancient religion—these are some of the factors in the present world situation which are playing havoc with a western-based Christian mission. However, there is another factor within the life of the church itself which is far more significant than any or all of these for the mission. It is that which calls for radical new thinking about the nature, aims, and methods of the mission. This factor is the existence of churches all around the globe. Christianity has in our time become in fact the universal religion which it has always claimed to be in essence.

II.

NEW TRENDS OF THOUGHT

It is the coming into existence of a community of worshipping, witnessing congregations of Christian disciples around the whole world that puts an end to one era of the Christian mission and opens another. Western Christianity can no longer act unilaterally in a sending operation. The planting by the Protestant mission through three centuries has resulted in a plenteous harvest. There is now an evangelical Christian community in the Pacific, Asia, Africa, and Latin America, not just in Europe, North America, Australia, and New Zealand. When the twentieth century opened, there was in the churches of those regions a communicant membership of 1,397,402 and a total community, including all baptized and under instruction, of 3,613,391. By 1925 communicants had increased to 3,614,154 and the total community to 8,342,378. The figures stood in 1952 at 11,151,646 communicants and a total community of 31,371,322. There remain today only a very few countries where Christians are prohibited from openly demonstrating their faith. There are other lands where they are under serious disabilities and are still too few to hope to be able to withstand prolonged persecution. There are others where Christians are a substantial minority and a few where they form the majority. There are churches worshipping, fellowshiping, ministering, and witnessing all around the world. That is the fact that spells an end to a "western" Christian mission and calls for a "world" Christian mission!

The western churches have hardly yet recovered from their astonishment over finding mature young churches with them in the household of faith and asking recognition of their foster parents. These new churches first made themselves evident on a world scale at the Jerusalem Conference of 1928. Their representatives first took an equal, and even a leading, role at the Madras Conference in 1938, about the same time that Protestant missionaries became generally aware of the corporate nature of Christian discipleship and of the importance of the Christian community. During World War II, when many were cut off from missionary direction or had to stand on their own feet in certain respects, they grew in maturity. The Whitby Conference of 1947 recognized this development and the call for "devolution" gave way to a summons to both the old and the young churches to join in "partnership in obedience." This change came because devolution seemed to look towards a complete elimina-

tion of the missionary from a role in the national church and to an end of the mission. Partnership appeared to be a truer goal because it recognized the continuing responsibility of the older churches in *koinonia*, in the mutual bearing of burdens, for the younger churches in their needs even though they might have become self-governing. However, the China experience and the heart-searching scrutiny of the last few years reveal that all too often the western churches have deluded themselves about the completeness of devolution and the thoroughness of the partnership. There is still too much western control, although often hidden. The China experience and present nationalistic pressure in other countries make it clear that remaining vestiges of western control only invite disaster. Old and young churches must find a new understanding of their relationship to each other within the body of Christ.

This world-wide distribution of Christian churches is hailed as the great new fact of our time, and the present is often called the "Ecumenical Age" of Protestant church history. The meaning of this modern miracle is frequently misunderstood, however, and much nonsense is heard about it, especially in America. One hears all too frequently the alarming statement that the "Age of Missions" has ended and the "Ecumenical Age" has come; therefore, since churches have everywhere come into being, we need no longer send missionaries but only exchange personnel and say nice things about each other as Christian brethren. At most we are supposed to exchange fraternal workers to assist each other. This is more than nonsense; it is heresy. The church exists for the mission, and Christ's mission cannot end until in the providence of God every man and every aspect of human society has heard the Gospel proclaimed and has responded. The mission cannot end until God ushers in his kingdom in all its fulness as the culmination of history. The existence of churches around the world does not indicate the end of the mission but rather that the necessary base for a world Christian mission is at last here.

It is exceedingly encouraging to note that while many western agencies are trying to find substitutes for the words "mission" and "missionary" the young churches are proudly claiming them for their new evangelistic activities. They are sending missionaries, without apologies for that term, even when dispatched in answer to a request from another young church. For example, the United Church of Christ in the Philippines has missionaries in Thailand, Indonesia, and Nigeria. This is a rebuke to American boards which say that they will send no more missionaries, but only fraternal workers, and wish to delete the word "mission" from their titles. If a man or woman is sent to serve only as a consultant to a young church at some point in its inner life, he may well be called a fraternal worker; but if all those who are sent out in service over-

seas are called this, it is clearly saying that henceforth the western agency is only participating in interchurch aid, not in the mission. Let the words "home" and "foreign" be eliminated in favor of a concept of a single world evangelistic advance; but if we lose from our vocabulary the words "mission" and "missionary" it will be because we have ceased to be obedient to the Great Commission. Mission is the function of the entire church of our Lord Jesus Christ, not just of the western churches.

There are very many matters related to the rise of this world-wide Christian community which impel us to fresh and fundamental thinking about the nature of the Christian mission. Among these are the examination of the "younger church" concept, of which the present circumstances are forcing an appraisal, the question of Christian unity and mission, the rise of permanent agencies for relief, and the peculiar new position of the American churches in the missionary enterprise.

A variety of elements enter into the motivation of Protestant missions, but on the whole the chief motive behind the enterprise has been simply obedience to the Great Commission heard anew in each succeeding generation during the past three hundred years. Attempts to set forth the theological basis of the mission have been rare in the past, and, excepting among the Germans, there has been little effort to develop theoretical systems for the missionary enterprise. Among English-speaking missionaries the program of the mission developed pragmatically as need was confronted and opportunity arose without the theological justification for it being determined. When it came to expressing the goal or aim of the mission, the English-speaking missionary during the last century, following the lead of Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson, has been accustomed to describe it as the fostering of self-governing, self-supporting, self-propagating churches. More recently the descriptive term "indigenous" has also been added. The churches which have been the objects of this treatment are generally called "younger" churches, in distinction from the fostering "older" churches.

The use of the term "younger" churches, rather than "young" churches, or simply churches without an adjective, is the key to understanding the present impasse and the urgency for rethinking the relationship. It was a patriarchal relationship: young churches were to be under the tutelage and control of the present bodies until they had passed slowly from infancy through adolescence to maturity and until the parent decided that maturity had been attained. This is an idea taken from the imperialistic experience of the western European nations, not from the Bible and theology. It is a product of colonialism. Moreover, like many parents with their children, the western churches have been very slow to admit

that maturity has been attained and to withdraw control. Furthermore, the methods of tutelage and control have often been such as really to hamper the desired growth. Recently it has been discovered that the "older-younger" relationship is Biblically and theologically unsound and that the "three-self" goal is only a partial, not a final, aim. The China experience and the pressures of nationalism have shown that it can result in an isolated church, cut off from the life of the whole body of Christ, and that, being self-centering, it may destroy a sense of responsibility for the total mission of the church. Quite recently there has come into use in some quarters the new term, "the responsible church," to indicate the desirable character of that church which the mission should try to raise up. While this term is still to be defined, it apparently has connotations for the church at all levels, from the local congregation to the community of Christians around the world.

Furthermore, the "older-younger" relationship involved the idea of mission as church extension and as the extension of Christendom. These are still fundamental in Roman Catholic missiology, which identifies the Roman Church with the Kingdom of God on earth. There was much of this idea of institutional and cultural extension in Protestant missions also although, with the exception of some denominations, an individualistic "Christian movement" rather than the church was stressed down to about the time of the Madras Conference in 1938. Churches in a Christian West were duplicating their own patterns and establishing Christian culture through new churches in the midst of heathendom. Now, however, any identifiable entity which can be called Christendom has long since disappeared, and the Christian churches of Europe and America find themselves in a post-Christian culture. The western churches and the young churches have awakened to the fact that the European lands are de-Christianized mission fields. This is no less true of America, despite the fact that the real decline of effective, relevant Christian faith is obscured by popular religiosity and increasing nominal church membership. The old basis on which "sending" and "receiving" was established has passed away. We have only churches in the midst of paganism which have the same function of witnessing, wherever they may be. All have a mission in common and must discover what mission means.

The Ecumenical Movement and world confessionalism are responses to the spread of churches around the globe. The Ecumenical Movement is the fruit of the missionary enterprise, and it ought to be understood widely as the effort of the churches in unity to proclaim the Lordship of Christ over all the globe and all of human life. It comprises three aspects: missions, or the witnessing of the faith to all peoples; the search for Christian unity; and the ministry of social transformation. However, "ecumenical" in gen-

eral usage almost comes to mean interdenominationalism and the association of churches on a national and international level for consultation, study and action. But *oikumene* means the inhabited earth, and what then could a truly "ecumenical movement" be but a missionary movement? Yet, on the contrary, it has been popularly associated with the quest for unity, and *oikumene* has been taken as the trademark of the World Council of Churches. There is a tendency for the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council to lay claim to the sole use of the name. However, the World Evangelical Fellowship, the organ of the Faith Missions, and the world confessional bodies are also ecumenical.

The young churches have welcomed this movement because it has brought them the recognition and sense of equality which their founding churches were slow in granting. Although the Ecumenical Movement arose out of missionary co-operation, ecumenical organs are mostly established on an ecclesiastical rather than a functional basis like that of the International Missionary Council. Consequently, ecumenical affairs are marked by the careful balancing of confessional interests and by the tremendous emphasis given to Faith and Order discussions on unity and church union.

Although the Ecumenical Movement provides the young churches with a much appreciated fellowship and a forum in which they can contribute to a discussion of Christianity's confrontation of the world, including the West, they are impatient with the stalemate in sterile Faith and Order discussions. They also at one and the same time welcome world confessionalism because of the opportunity for global participation and fear it for its threat to the vitally necessary unity which they must manifest in the face of the local pressures coming from their non-Christian environment. The young churches are asking the question: Unity for what? They suggest that the answer is: Unity for mission. This answer would remove the roadblock to more fruitful Faith and Order discussions and provide a dynamic for global church relationships. It is not a matter for surprise that the United Church of South India should in its constitution set forth the grounds of the union as being unity for mission.

One important department of ecumenical activity is relief work: The World Council of Churches, the Lutheran World Federation, the Mennonite Central Committee, and other agencies have created global programs in this field, and most American denominations have established their own boards, commissions or committees which operate either independently or through the ecumenical agencies. What was expected to be a temporary emergency has become a chronic situation, and the relief programs appear to be permanent. Relief has gone to needy Christians and has thus been

a splendid example of *diakonia* on a world scale. But, of course, this relief has not been limited to Christians and has ministered to human need regardless of religious affiliation. Thus it has become *kærugyma*, witness, mission, for it is given in the name of Jesus Christ. However, there has not always been co-operation between relief and mission agencies, and sometimes there has even been suspicion and hostility among them. At any rate, what is in effect a second world-wide missionary structure, operated and dominated by the western churches, has been created parallel to the old foreign missionary enterprise, and relying little upon its experience. Because it does not deal with church extension, most of its supporters and its staff personnel have not recognized it as being a form of mission. Its chief danger lies not so much in the duplication of organization and in conflict with the methods and processes of the national churches and the foreign mission agencies but in being a form of proclamation of the Gospel through the dramatic word unaccompanied by the spoken word and the witness of the worshipping and fellowshiping community. It stands in danger of becoming humanitarianism instead of mission. Thus another development within the life of the churches compels Christians to ask: "What is mission?"

Still another circumstance which raises many questions about the nature of the mission is the new position of the American churches *vis-a-vis* the total missionary enterprise. There are several aspects of this. First of all, the Protestant churches of the United States since the end of World War II find themselves in a position similar to the American Roman Catholic Church after World War I. At that time, almost overnight, the United States changed from the status of a mission field to becoming the powerhouse of the Roman Catholic Mission. Well over eighty per cent of the funds for the Roman world mission come from the United States, although less than ten per cent of the missionaries come from this country. Today the course of history, especially the economic decline of Europe, requires that the American Protestant churches also provide the larger part of the funds needed for the evangelical mission. However, our church people regard the mission as only one among many good causes promoted by the denominations, and, until they have a passionate devotion to the mission, they are not likely to give with the liberality required. Moreover, it may be said with truth that in many denominations promotion is being done on the basis of the situation of a generation ago and not of the present. Further, if the money were forthcoming, how could it be used? It would be folly simply to expand the programs of the American mission boards. More than half the total missionary staff is now composed of persons from the United States, and they are suspect in many quarters as agents of American cultural

imperialism. So this question becomes urgent: what is the American role in a genuine world mission? Also, American Christianity is under fire all around the world for exporting every variety of American religious expression along with rivalry and dissension. These nullify the effective Christian witness, cause turmoil in the Christian community, and provoke active hostility towards the missionary enterprise in general on the part of governments and the populace. Finally, in this interdependent world, Washington, New Delhi, and Tokyo are closer together than two villages in Ohio and Kansas, and American Christians are participating in a world mission even though they may never cross the boundaries of the nation. Despite what we ourselves may know about our homeland, the United States is considered a Christian nation abroad. The loud war talk of our atom-bomb-brandishing, inept propagandists, our government's propensity to back reactionary political parties and colonial powers, the fight against desegregation in the South, and incidents in the North like the recent pressure which some people in Detroit brought against an American Indian neighbor speak more loudly in Africa and Asia than the Gospel of reconciliation preached by our missionaries. What is mission? The American churches must answer that before they can play their destined roles.

One fortunate development offers hope of bringing thousands of laymen into front line personal participation in the mission overseas as well as at home. It provides also for a second line of voluntary, non-professional evangelism where the western missionary may be eliminated by nationalism or other circumstances. This is the extension and recovery of the doctrine of the priesthood or ministry of all believers and its application to the world mission. It is the new insistence upon ministry being involved in discipleship and upon it being the duty of the layman as much as of the ordained pastor. One form of ministry in which all ought to engage is witness or evangelism. It is now being urged that Christians traveling and stationed abroad in the exercise of their business and professional duties count themselves as auxiliary missionaries and take every opportunity which presents itself in their normal contacts with people to witness to their faith in Christ by life, deed, and word. This is just what Christians did normally in the first century and what they normally ought to do today. An American full-time, professional missionary might be silenced or expelled because of nationalism in some Asian country whereas an American business representative, or Point IV staff man, or a teacher in government employment, might be able without restraint to demonstrate what it means to have faith in Jesus Christ. We Christians are far behind the Muslims (whose missionary movement is almost entirely a lay endeavor), Buddhists, and Hindus in this kind of lay propagation of religion. The Swiss Missionary

Council and the Conference of Missionary Societies of Great Britain and Ireland regularly provide training facilities for laymen going abroad in their business and professional relationships. Participation in the mission overseas by even a small number of such lay missionaries would eventually revolutionize the life of the churches here in the homeland. It would, among other things, help to make working disciples out of nominal church members and it would introduce a critical and theologically discriminating element into the uncritical, syncretizing, "least-common-denominator" religiosity which passes for religion among millions of American laymen.

It is factors within the Christian community such as those which we have discussed which point to a new era for the mission. The external factors mentioned in the first lecture only add urgency to the reappraisal of the nature, task, and methods of the mission. A one-way sending mission on the part of the western churches may be coming to an end, but there is beginning to emerge a greater world mission of the Christian church, proclaiming the saviorhood and lordship of Jesus Christ on every frontier of human life.

The vision of a world Christian mission is a potent leaven causing a ferment in missionary thinking exceeding anything known since those formative years at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century. Moreover, there is for the first time a widespread concern with the theological fundamentals. The boards and societies, to be sure, are engrossed in matters of organization, methods, and short-term goals, since such matters are demanding immediate action; but there is a growing awareness that long-term policy and strategy questions await theological illumination. The strategists are talking about, and experimenting with, interdenominational, international, interracial teams; with united missions, such as the new one in Nepal; with more effective means of co-operation and joint action on the part of old and young churches, such as the Asian Council for Ecumenical Mission. Exchange of personnel between old and young churches is no longer one-sided, from the West only; but young church representatives are coming to the West to hold positions of responsible ministry and to ask challenging questions. There is an intense interest in the history of missions, and the lessons of the past are being brought to the illumination of the present. Studies in the life and growth of the young churches are in progress. In the theological field there are two principal foci of concern: the question, "What is mission?" and the relation of the Christian revelation to other religions, or, as the subject is being newly phrased, "The Gospel and Religions."

Studies in the history of missions at present hold first place among scholars in the United States, Great Britain, and the Scan-

dinavian countries. It is to be gratefully noted that in America the history of missions is no longer left to church historians only but that "secular" historians are increasingly recognizing the importance of the mission in international affairs and cultural relations. Canon Max Warren's studies in the Biblical and theological fields are stimulating thinking in all English speaking countries, and Bishop Leslie Newbigin's book, *The Household of God*, is evidence of a growing concern with the relationship of the church and its unity to mission. A study group in the United States has worked for five years on the theological basis of the mission and has stimulated its members to study which will bear fruit in their teaching and writing. Scholars in the Netherlands and Germany, while not neglecting history, are principally concerned with the Christian faith and the non-Christian religions and with the nature of the mission. Hendrick Kraemer, with his view of radical discontinuity between the Christian revelation and other religions, represents the prevailing Continental view. The very conservative Dutch theologians of the Reformed churches (similar to the Christian Reformed Church in this country) led by J. H. Bavinck put forth significant views contrasting with the Kraemer theory at a number of points. By way of a footnote, one of the most interesting is this: Man in his sin always rebels against God and seeks to escape from him. But God in his love pursues man and confronts him in many ways—in his conscience, in his suffering, in nature, and so forth, and ultimately he breaks through man's resistance. Then deposits of truth are made, which can be identified and used as points of contact for the Gospel. A consultation held at Davos, Switzerland last summer is inaugurating a series of studies in the Gospel and Religions. It is the German and Dutch missionary scholars above all who are working on the nature of the mission, and they have approached the problem from the vantage point of eschatology. They came to this concern when Holland was occupied by German troops and when faithful Christians in both countries were contending with the Nazi regime and were cut off from their missions overseas. They have continued in the following years to probe deeper. These studies have destroyed the concept of mission as church extension, shifted the emphasis from the nature of the church as an institution to the function of the church, and have pointed to the mission as the distinctive task of the church "between the times." Freytag, Hartenstein, Rosencranz and a few others have been the chief German spokesmen. Hoekendijk is the best-known of the Dutch scholars and the chief proponent of a new concept of the apostolate.

German thinking about eschatology and mission is a labyrinth of abstractions so endless and involved that I do not think it possible to enter upon a characterization, much less a summary of its main

lines, in a few minutes. It is sufficient now to express gratitude to it for its stimulating effect, especially with regard to the functional emphasis in the relation of church and mission. Since the Dutch theologian Hoekendijk carries this functional emphasis to the utmost, even to the point where the church becomes expendable, and in his idea of the apostolate blazes a fascinating new trail, I would like to indicate his line of thought. It is especially noteworthy that he provides a substantial theological foundation for lay evangelism, although too much at the expense of the church and the ordained ministry. According to him "the mission to the heathen is the God-given possibility which has its foundation in the fulfillment of the messianic promises of the conversion of the people. It takes place in the last days, between the Resurrection and the coming again of Christ; it is the eschatological action of God wherein he completes his plan of salvation and through his spirit continually overcomes every resistance and unwillingness and gives the Gospel to the whole *oekumene*." The church must be the church of the apostolate, wholly and completely oriented towards the coming kingdom. He states: "We refuse to regard the church as anything but a function of the apostolate, a vehicle of the kingdom in the service of the world." Hoekendijk seems to make a fundamental distinction between the church and the Christian community which seems unwarranted to many and which is probably due to the special coloring of the word "church" imparted by the state church or *Volkskirke* concept in European tradition. The apostolate is not a call to the office-bearing clergy but to the whole community, which is intended to be the evangelizing body. This community must bring the Gospel to the total environment and neglect none of its varying needs. This community of God's people is in the world but not of the world. The conduct of its corporate life is the sign and demonstration of the coming kingdom, "where sjalom-fellowship, justice, integrity, and peace will reign." Through and around this community, which becomes the center of social integration, the world will be renewed and turned towards the coming kingdom of Christ.

Hoekendijk believes that his concept of the apostolate can break the present "deadlock" in missionary strategy. The missionary work today, he says, simply consolidates what a former generation achieved. The cause of present missionary impotence is to be found in the failure to recognize that a new man, "the fourth man," is now coming into existence as he lives in a "post-Christian," "post-church," "post-Bourgeois," and "post-personal" situation. Man today is no longer capable of personal decisions because he exists only as a member of a group. The new method which this fact demands is an emphasis upon the laity, who always live in the very midst of the world. Professor Bavinck summarizes Hoekendijk's

view thus: "Such laymen may well have to withdraw from the context of the church, at least temporarily, to take this being-in-the-world seriously, as the Church is everywhere looked on with suspicion. In this way there would come into being a 'para-parochial' community which would live more in the midst of the world than the church, with its whole tradition, could ever do. This community would be 'independent, would find its own expression of its faith, and would seek its own form of organization.'"

Attention must be called briefly to the document *Why Missions?* which an American study group submitted as a preparatory document for the Willingen Conference. It represents the most substantial theological consideration of the nature of the Christian mission as yet known on this continent and grounds the mission in the doctrine of the Trinity. Its position may be summarized as follows: The church's obligation to make God as revealed in Jesus Christ so known as to be faithfully served by all men arises from the outgoing activity of God himself. In Jesus Christ, "the visible expression of the invisible God," he makes himself known to men as he really is, and through Christ men are bound to a loyalty and into a society in which all barriers to the integration and fulfillment of a personal and community life are overcome. The single purpose of the Christian mission is to give in word and deed "a plain and persuasive witness to the power of Jesus Christ in and over the world."

The lordship of the living Christ is the point of departure for the missionary activity of the church, whose head Christ is. This lordship of Christ must be seen in the context of the whole activity of the triune God. The role of our Lord is not minimized, for it is in meeting him that we are claimed for God, and it is his story we tell and his gospel we proclaim; but the mission is grounded in the entire recreating and reconciling activity of the triune God.

The equality and activity of the triune God are communicated to the church through the Gospel. The missionary movement is the front line of the church towards the world. On that front line the church proclaims the Gospel, which is God's good news, telling the story of what God out of his love has done and is doing in and through Israel, the prophets, the Messiah, the apostles and the church. The cross became good news when God raised Jesus from the dead and made him the king of the new age. Part of the gospel story is the contrast between the old age before the resurrection and the new age following it. The two are contrasted as follows: The present evil age is that sphere where Satan usurps God's sovereignty; where sin, the Law, death, and the flesh reign; and where the kings of the earth exert lordship and men are bound in a slavery to which they are blind. The coming new age, on the other hand, is that sphere where God's sovereignty is uncontested:

where righteousness, grace, life, and the Spirit reign; and where the King of Kings subdues the earthly kings and where men are freed in order to become slaves of the Lord, whom they know and love. Creation is in agony in the old age, and there self-seeking men spend themselves in ceaseless warring and lusting, their work ending in futility, and all ways lead to destruction. In the new age, however, sons are adopted through that same agony, and loving they give their lives for others, finding peace, power, and fruitful work, and there the one way leads to glorification. These two ages do not follow one another in chronological order but are in ceaseless conflict in the hearts of men, a fluctuating line of invisible warfare cutting through the whole of creation. Moreover, the line between the two ages is not a line but a series of God's works by which he has brought, and is bringing, his kingdom to men. The response of men to the good news becomes an intrinsic part of the news itself. The church proclaims this Gospel by means which may be called "the strategy of God's contemporaneity" . . . and "the integrity of the missionary motivation." The report concerning what God has done becomes recent and even current news when the Spirit enables a person to see what Christ is now doing on the present scene of battle between the old and new ages. Wherever men see the signs of the powerful invasion of God's kingdom, "those signs point to the consummation of God's redemptive plan for the world."

Distinction is made between "contemporaneity" and "modernity." Modernity is the adaptation of the Gospel to the present situation, but contemporaneity is the adaptation of the present situation to the Gospel. An exploration of the Gospel in the Biblical context reveals the ongoing contemporaneity of Jesus Christ and shows that it is in historical and social change that God presses home his plans for the fulfilment of his purposes. Change as such is not divine, but neither is stability. "According to the Gospel, historical and social change is the instrument of God's new order in so far as such a change breaks through and breaks down the self-satisfying patterns and pretensions of the old order." It is the business of the mission from its advanced position on the boundary of the two ages to report what God is breaking up in order to spread his kingdom in the world. The function of trinitarian theology is so to focus the light of the Gospel upon historical and social change that every present situation may be understood in terms of the strategy—not of its own but of God's contemporaneity. At this moment of history that light must be focused especially upon the Communist movement. The meaning of God's activity is to be sought by the mission in the effects of technology, in the new hope, in every aspect of the power struggle. In this revolutionary situation the church must act, taking care not to

confuse a particular culture with the universal Gospel. Caught up in the moving strength of the triune God, the church can act in this and every present situation with joy and hope, facing the future with the certainty that God is in every future with judgment and with redemption.

The dynamic activity of the triune God in the Gospel and in the present situation calls for a total and dynamic response. Missionary motivation is the inevitable response to the whole revelation of God in Christ. "In this view missionary obligation is not a deduction but a reflex of faith. It is spontaneous, not studied; primary, not secondary; prior, not subsequent; reflexive, not derivative." The missionary is the disciple who is actually on the front line, basically theological and not geographical, which is defined by what God is doing in the world. The missionary motive is not obligation to something but a response to God revealed in Jesus Christ. It is the normal relation of every disciple to his Lord.

This new frontier of missionary thinking—of theological encounter—is one of the most exciting and important posts of missionary service today. It has been slowly emerging during the past quarter of a century as the mission has been forced progressively to come to grips with theology. The story of how this encounter has emerged in the thinking of the series of modern world missionary conferences is set forth in a pamphlet entitled *Towards a Theology of Missions* by Wilhelm Anderson. He states: "Now it lies in the nature of the case that missions and theology cannot forever pass one another by, as though neither of them had anything to do with the other. At least, this situation could continue indefinitely only if one or other of these two entities, or both of them, had failed to be that which it proposes to be. A theology which desires to serve the revealed Word of God and not simply to be an exercise of human reason cannot forever remain a mere onlooker, without any participation in the work of the messenger of that Word and its progress throughout the world." Neither can the mission in the new era hope to go forward without a chart and compass, without the illumination of the Bible and theology. Biblical study, theology, history, and present missionary experience must all contribute to a fresh contemporary theory of mission.

It would be interesting to explore some of the new lines of thought advanced by various scholars, but another lecture in this series would be necessary for that. The final section of this lecture is directed to some notes on the nature of the Christian mission along lines which, I think, might be fruitfully studied as we seek to answer the question, "What is mission?"

The mission is simply the proclamation of the good news that God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, an act of witness by an organism, the church, which God has put into the world for

that purpose. The origin of the mission is to be found in the love of God, who has never left his children orphaned at any time but has ever sought them, although they are estranged by sin, that they might be one with him and with one another in him. As it is stated in the report of the Willingen Conference: "Out of the depths of his love for us, the Father has sent forth his own beloved Son to reconcile all things to himself, that we and all men might, through the Spirit, be made one in him with the Father in that perfect love which is the very nature of God." This outgoing of Divine Love in judgment upon estranging sin and in reconciling grace has been ever and again mediated by the Holy Spirit directly to individuals and through God's prophets among all peoples. These reconciling acts of God in history culminate in the cross of Jesus Christ, in which the mystery of God's redeeming purpose is fully revealed, through which the powers of evil are condemned and overcome, and by which the sovereign rule of God's Kingdom is established among men. Confronted in the cross by the revelation of God's love, every man must acknowledge or reject that sovereign lordship, and choose or reject the reconciliation there offered. Christ in his cross has overcome the world, and the Kingdom of God is among us, but that kingdom will not come in all its fulness, and that sovereignty will not be made absolute, until God in his providence ushers in his new age towards which all of history is moving. In the meantime, "This Gospel of the Kingdom (must) be preached throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations; and then the end will come." For this purpose of witnessing, the church is put into the world as the body of Christ, to share in his reconciling ministry, by making the proclamation.

Therefore, the church exists to carry out God's mission and is the testimony, not the end, of God's redeeming love. It is too much to follow Hoekendijk and say that the church is only the function of the mission, but mission, or witness to God's sovereignty and reconciling love, is, indeed, the chief function of the church. Because in its institutional aspect the church is human and involved in human sin there is always a temptation to identify the church with the kingdom and to exalt it as an institution. It is not the kingdom but the herald of the kingdom and the gathering of the first-fruits of the kingdom. The church is set by God in the world between the resurrection and the final coming of the kingdom in its fulness to perform this mission, and not only is the mission the foremost function of the church but its two complementary functions also have missionary significance. The church's three functions are worship, fellowship, and witness.

The first of these functions is worship, which has distinct missionary implications. When the church acknowledges the Creator in praise and thanksgiving, and Christian disciples make their common

offering of supplications and intercessions through the great High Priest, they are proclaiming the sovereignty of God and celebrating his love before all mankind so that it thus has an aspect of witness. Moreover, Christians make intercessions for all men—the whole world is in view, and they must feel that their worship is incomplete until all men have joined with them in the great choir of praise. Moreover, at the very heart of the church's worship is the Lord's Supper or Eucharist. This mystery can never be fully measured and defined by men, and in singling out one phase of its meaning I do not intend to ignore or deny others. Among the many meanings there are these: It is an act of witness, showing forth the Lord's death until he comes again; it is an experience of that reconciliation with God through Christ which the church must proclaim; and it is an act of identification with our Lord in the mission of his cross and a dedication to obedience in that mission. St. Paul instructs us: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the same loaf." He goes on to show in the same passage that just as those who partake of pagan sacrifice become partners with demons, so in partaking of the Lord's Supper we have become partners with Christ in his mission. Therefore, in the Eucharist the worshipping congregation acknowledges its participation in that mission and consecrates itself on the altar of the Gospel to that service. Unhappily in American Christianity there is such an overwhelming preoccupation with the communion of the individual, emphasizing the personal forgiveness of sin and mystical fellowship with our Lord, that little is ever heard about the corporate aspects of the Lord's Supper and the missionary dimension in which Christ's table is spread.

The second function is fellowship in *koinonia*, the nourishing of the common life of the body. It is the spiritual life of the members in Christ. Many figures of speech have been employed in the Bible and Christian literature to describe the church, but no other, despite its inadequacy, has been used as much as the mystical body of Christ. No person can become a Christian excepting on an individual basis by making a declaration of faith and a sacrifice of obedient allegiance. Then by God's grace through the working of the Holy Spirit the person is incorporated into the mystical body of his Lord. However, it is impossible for him from that moment to be a Christian by himself, and to himself, for he is part and parcel of the common life, a member of every other disciple similarly incorporated into the mystical body. "We, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another." Since the distinguishing characteristic of the corporate life is that

love which Paul celebrates in the thirteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, the members bear one another's burdens. This love expresses itself as *koinonia*, or fellowship, and fellowship is manifested among other ways in *diakonia*, the ministry of the whole body to the needs of its members. *Diakonia* always spills over into works of compassion towards needy persons in the world outside the fellowship and thus tends towards becoming overtly an act of witness. However, even the *diakonia* within the body has missionary implications, for the fundamental purpose of the *koinonia* or fellowship is not the joy and edification of the members but the authentication of the word of witness.

The "High Priestly Prayer" of our Lord in John 17 must be set alongside the Great Commission. Our Lord promised power for witnessing, but he also prayed the Father to preserve the unity of the church by grounding it in the very unity of the Godhead, since only the unity of the Godhead demonstrated in the mystical body of Christ, in human terms, can convince skeptical men that God did send Jesus Christ to be their Savior. "I do not pray for those only, but also for those who are to believe in me through their word, that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." Unity is to be the pragmatic proof that the Gospel of reconciliation actually does reconcile. Men are to look on the church and see the first-fruits of the reconciled community, and seeing, they will believe. This is why factions in a congregation, controversies that split a denomination, "sheep stealing" between churches, and fomenting dissension among Christians, caste and racial barriers in churches, and every act of unbrotherliness undercuts effective evangelism and why every positive demonstration of reconciliation in Christ validates the spoken word.

The third function is the proclamation to the world of the message of salvation by word and by deed. The church goes forth into the world at the command of its Lord, baptized with power by the Holy Spirit, to witness by word and deed and quality of life to the lordship and saviorhood of Jesus Christ. This conscious, direct, purposeful witnessing is the apostolate. The preaching of the Gospel is the special task of the church in the present temporal order; the mission is the distinctive task of the church between the times. The Gospel must be preached to the whole world before God will bring to fulfilment his purposes for mankind in the new age of his kingdom. German missionary thinking about eschatology has been most helpful in transferring the emphasis from the institutional existence of the church to the main function of the church. This stimulates the church to more firm, self-conscious concern with its own life, to selfless and fearless action. It destroys parochialism and leads to concern with the proclamation of the

Gospel in the whole world. The message which the church in its apostolate addresses to every man and to human society is the gospel of reconciliation: God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself. Timeless, this gospel is also timely, and never more so than now, when men everywhere are seeking unity and community under the threat of atomic annihilation. The Gospel takes on especial urgency and relevance for the people of our time. The apostolate likewise takes on a new urgency, and the church is called boldly to preach the Gospel and to demonstrate by the quality of its own brotherhood that God can indeed reconcile men and bring them into community when they acknowledge his fatherhood, become new men in Jesus Christ, and are subject to his lordship.

History provides plenty of evidence as to how pride corrupts the church when this body identifies itself with the Kingdom of God. Pride can also corrupt even when the church thinks of itself as the herald of the kingdom, for there is a temptation to think of the kingdom as being brought into being by the church. It is God who creates this kingdom and his Holy Spirit who extends it. The church is the servant of the Holy Spirit in the mission. This in no way impinges upon the autonomy and genuine responsibility of the church in the apostolate, for it is an obedient service which is nevertheless perfect liberty. Obedience is always to the Great Commission: "Go!" Max Warren's new book, *The Christian Imperative*, a Bible study, brings out the fulness of the commission in these terms: "Go preach;" "go teach;" "go heal;" and "go baptize." It is no arbitrary, authoritarian, impersonal decree; but involved in the command is the assurance of the enabling and continuing presence of him who commands, experienced through the promised Holy Spirit, who "transforms an imperative into an inspiration."

Almost more than anything else needed for effective missionary obedience in the future is the acceptance of the Biblical teaching that conversion is the work of the Holy Spirit alone and not of any human agent. Almost more than any other thing the troubles of the missionary enterprise and the obstacles to adaptation to a new order of mission are to be laid to the prideful usurpation of the role of the Holy Spirit by missionary agencies and agents. Missionaries, and pastors in the home churches, too, are often enmeshed in the sin of statistics and the fear which it breeds. They think that they work conversion and must show either their faithfulness or their effectiveness by the number of conversions which they can report. This leads to terrible things. I heard a missionary once argue against all other types of work and advocate the devoting of all funds to what she called "child evangelism" because "a child could be saved at a cost of twenty-five cents." Let us remember that it is only by the Spirit that a man can call Jesus Lord; then we can be delivered from the pride of being a missionary, from the

fear of failure, and from the crushing weight of statisticism. Every agent and agency becomes expendable, but never the mission.

The Holy Spirit, working through missionary heralds, raises up both the new man and the new community in Christ. The Bible knows nothing of the individualistic "Christian Movement" concept which was so long prominent as an objective. Disciples are always members of a worshipping, fellowshiping, witnessing community. Nor does the Bible know anything about "younger churches" which must be treated as children and held in tutelage until they grow up to maturity and can be trusted by the parent churches to begin a mission of their own. Where two or three are gathered together in Jesus' name, he has promised to be in the midst of them. They are then a church, part of *the church*, his body, and participating in his mission. As soon as two or three are brought together by the Holy Spirit as disciples and formed as a church, this new community possesses the functions of worship, fellowship, and witness, and must embark on the discharge of the apostolate at once. There cannot be a church without a mission. Thus the Holy Spirit raises up new churches, broadens the base of the mission, and leads the body of Christ in an ever expanding apostolate.

Thus it is in our time that the apostolate has reached global proportions. It is our privilege to share in the first days of a Christian world mission and, with our brethren in Christ from every land and culture, to proclaim Christ Lord on every frontier of human life as well as every square mile of the earth's surface.

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